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SUBJECT: QATAR'S LATEST THOUGHTS ON GCC RECONSTRUCTION MECHANISM

REF: SECSTATE 23135

Classified By: Amb. LeBaron for Reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

(C) KEY POINTS

-- Ambassador conveyed reftel points March 12 to Dr. Khalid Al Attiyah, MFA Minister of State (International Cooperation and Conferences). Ambassador urged that the GCC restructure its Gaza reconstruction funding mechanism in order to utilize existing assistance mechanisms, including the World Bank Trust Fund, the PA's single treasury account, and the UN Consolidated Appeal.

-- Al Attiyah thought that such coordination could occur, through a GCC reconstruction office to be established in Gaza. He said the GCC office would have wide latitude to enter into development and reconstruction agreements with Palestinian entities, international NGOs, and UN agencies and offices, among others.

-- The GCC states are "waiting to see the outcome of Egypt's mediation" before deciding how the reconstruction mechanism will work, Al-Attiyah added, mentioning uncertainties over border crossings and other logistical and security issues.

-- Ambassador left a copy of reftel fact sheet.

(C) COMMENT

-- Al Attiyah's comments indicate the political decision to use a separate GCC funding mechanism is firm. Still unclear is how this mechanism will actually use its funds - i.e., as transfers to "the legitimate Palestinian authority in Gaza," UN agencies, NGO partners, or by its own direct programming.

End Key Points and Comment.

¶1. (C) In a March 12 meeting with MFA Minister of State for International Cooperation and Conferences Dr. Khalid Al Attiyah, Ambassador conveyed reftel points, using them to explore with Al Attiyah the GCC's reconstruction funding mechanism, and strongly recommending that the GCC increase its coordination with existing assistance mechanisms. Ambassador specifically stressed the need to work with the World Bank Trust Fund, the PA's single treasury account, and the UN Consolidated Appeal, as well as other mechanisms already identified by United Nations agencies and the PA.

¶2. (C) Al Attiyah left the door a bit ajar for such

coordination. He said the GCC intends to establish an office in Gaza to identify reconstruction partners and to oversee program implementation. The office would have wide latitude in identifying implementing partners, including Palestinian entities, international NGO's, and UN agencies and offices, among others. Al Attiyah equated the idea to what Qatar had done in south Lebanon after the 2006 war.

¶13. (C) Al Attiyah underscored that the GCC wants to work only through "legitimate authorities" in Gaza, and was "waiting to see the outcome of Egypt's mediation" before deciding on the specific operational details of the GCC aid office in Gaza. He emphasized Qatar's hope that a unity government would emerge from the talks, but said the mechanism and the GCC Gaza reconstruction office concepts have been established so that the GCC can go in "once the (security) environment is ready." It is not dependent upon the reemergence of a unity government, he said.

¶14. (C) Still, Al Attiyah stated that if there is a new government, the GCC mechanism and reconstruction office would work with it as the legitimate authority, whether that government emerges from an agreement between the parties or as the result of early elections.

¶15. (C) Ambassador reiterated the importance of working with established aid delivery mechanisms such as the World Bank Trust Fund, the PA's single treasury account, and the UN Consolidated Appeal, and left a copy of reftel fact sheet on these USG-supported mechanisms.

¶16. (C) Al Attiyah expressed his hope that the GCC and USG
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positions would be reconciled, and commented it was strange that the world has raised billions to help the Palestinians in Gaza and yet the parties are "reluctant to come together to build their country."

¶17. (C) Separately, Al Attiyah noted that Qatar Foundation's Reach Out to Asia (ROTA) charity has USD 78 million earmarked for Gaza reconstruction, and is planning to work on building 37 schools. He was unfamiliar with all the details but thought ROTA would be working with UNRWA, UNESCO, Save the Children - Sweden, and Mercy Corps, among others.

LeBaron